



Gillmore Lands in Charleston

Artist: W. T. Crane

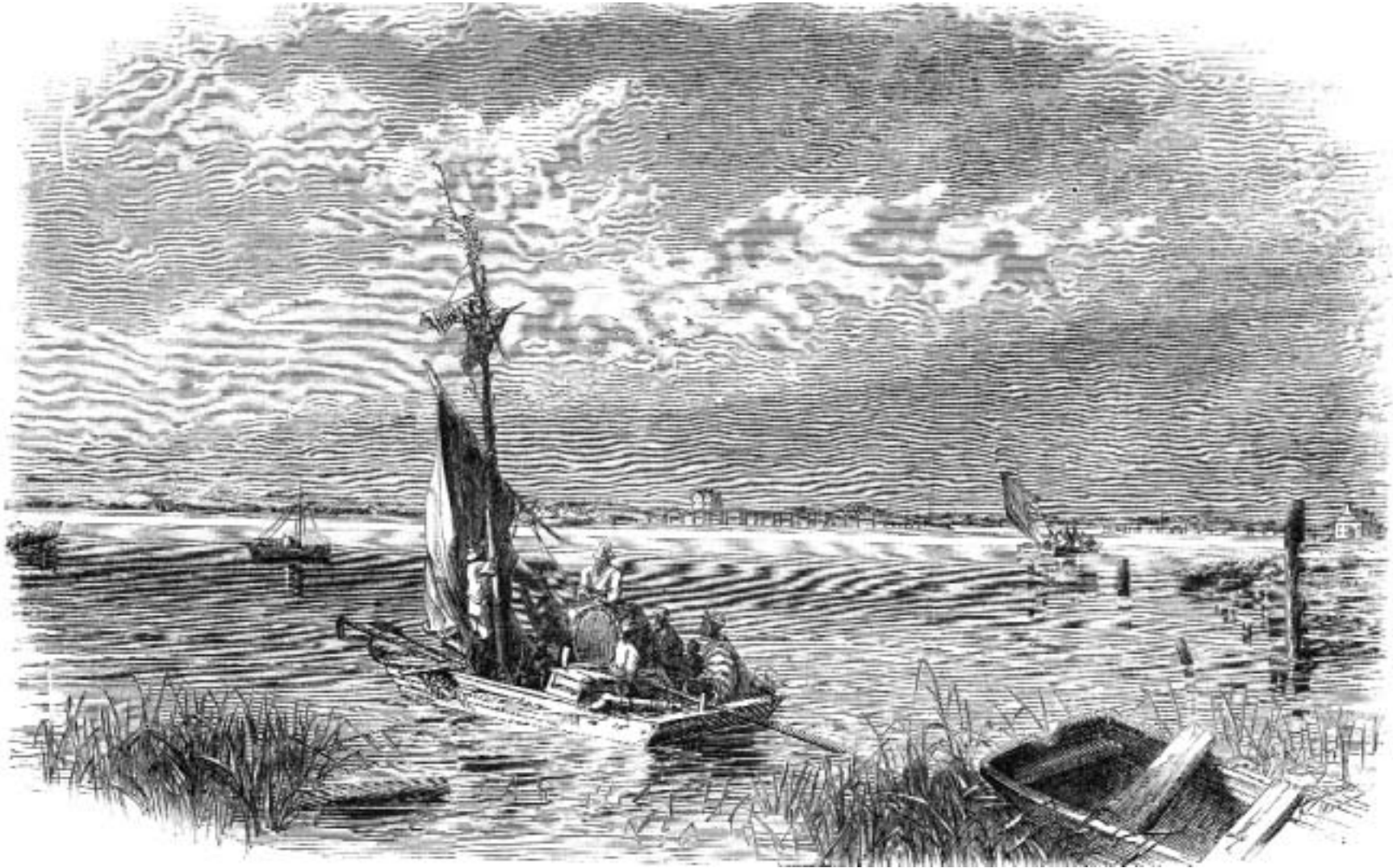
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

This illustration depicts Gillmore's return to Charleston, landing at Vanderhorst's Wharf on Feb. 20, 1865. In his drawing, W. T. Crane, a *Leslie's* correspondent, shows the landing with a large and enthusiastic crowd gathered to receive Gillmore. Appropriately, Crane writes:

Our readers must not too hastily conclude from the sketch that the Charlestonians are repentant – for the mass there assembled was composed

principally of colored persons, citizens of Northern birth and what the 'gallant and pure-blooded Chivalry' call 'white trash.'

With the inclusion of the gentleman on the left and the women with the children at the back of the crowd, Crane effectively demonstrates that not everyone relished the opportunity to welcome Gillmore to the city he reduced to ashes.



The Ashley River

Artist: W. T. Crane

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

By 1865, Charleston was a city in ruins. In one day, the fire of 1861 ravaged the Charleston peninsula. Rebuilding after the fire was impossible since all resources were directed toward the war effort. Nevertheless, it was the siege that cost the city most dearly. As the longest siege of the war, Charleston bled in every way. Not only physically devastating, the siege inflicted a severe economic and emotional toll. As the Confederate army evacuated Charleston, much of the remaining infrastructure was

destroyed to prevent its use by Union forces waiting to enter the city. On every count, by war's end, Charleston was gutted.

In the background of this illustration is the Ashley River bridge, partially destroyed by retreating Confederates in February 1865. In the wake of the war, Charleston families, white and black, were poverty-stricken.



The Watermelon Market

Artist: James E. Taylor

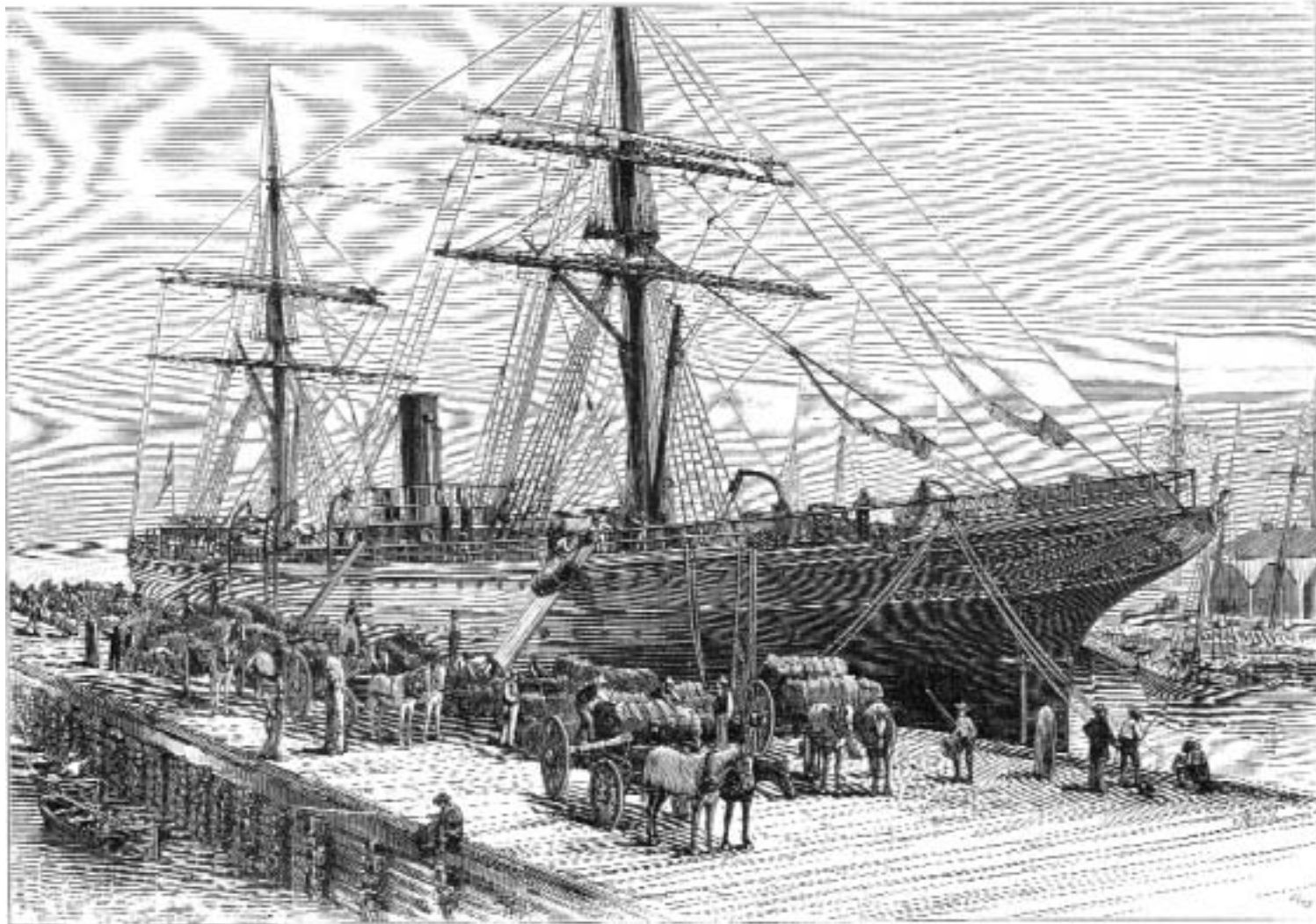
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Occupation forces focused on policing and cleaning up the city throughout 1865. Along with the troops, several hundred laborers were hired to haul garbage and debris out of the city. Thousands of freedmen left farms and plantations, and flocked to Charleston seeking opportunity. Opportunities, however, were scant.

By 1866, Charleston was starting to get back on her feet. Pres. Andrew Johnson appointed native South Carolinian George W. Williams to oversee the customs operation in the state. A group of Charleston businessmen organized the Board of

Trade to stimulate business in the city. The aim was to restore Charleston's place as the center of Southern trade and commerce.

As depicted in this illustration, food markets sprung up, offering fresh produce. The artist's rendering shows no change in the relationship of whites and blacks – all blacks are shown in subservient roles no different than during antebellum times. In other regards, however, with a struggling economy and dramatic changes to the city's social order, Charleston in 1866 resembled anything but the antebellum age.



Loading Cotton

From a photograph by George N. Barnard
Harper's Weekly

Cotton and rice had created the enormous wealth of the aristocrat planter class in South Carolina. Both cash crops required prodigious labor forces, economically possible under the structure of slavery. After the war, with slavery formally gone, Charlestonians, white and black, had significant adjustments to make merely to survive.

Many white planters were either absent or dead following the war, often leaving children struggling with the responsibility of maintaining family plantation properties.

They had no cash, few assets to obtain credit and no experience negotiating for labor in a manner never experienced by their forefathers.

Freedmen, though no longer enslaved, were severely compromised. While most had farming skills, they had neither cash nor experience negotiating for seed and credit.